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ABSTRACT

This discussion of effective communication for leaders in the field of librarianship begins by providing a historical overview which highlights the librarian's influential role from the earliest days of recorded language; the evolution and modification of words in individual languages from crude forms to their electronic storage and transmission; and contributions of library leaders from the sixth century B.C. to more modern times. Focusing on communication, the second of four sections discusses networking for success, including personal, organizational, and electronic networking. The third section presents a model, or case, which stresses the importance of communication and explains how a change of language has brought about a whole new life for one specific academic library, both on and off campus. A discussion of the need for cooperation and sharing between the traditional and public service areas and outreach to campus or community organizations concludes the paper. (21 references) (CGD)

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COMMUNICATION FOR LEADERSHIP:

A SEVEN LETTER WORD

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COMMUNICATION FOR LEADERSHIP:
A Seven Letter Word

> I see communication as a huge umbrella that covers and affects all that goes on between human beings. Once a human being has arrived on this earth, communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships he makes with others and what happens to him with others and what happens to him in the world about him.[1]

Faithfully, I read the call for papers. Each time I think, maybe next time. Then came President Eastman's call for a paper on the language of leadership for librarians. What a natural! I am a library leader, I spend a great deal of time communicating, I hold such lofty thoughts on the subject and I have the perfect example to illustrate my premise. Well, three out of four isn't bad. Actually, four out of four if you, the reader, will consider my thoughts to be lofty. Indeed, as I began the literature search there were other people echoing the phrases I was preparing to put on paper such as Satir in Peopleworking[2] and Hammond.[3] Yet, the pieces were so scattered and nowhere was there a document that pulled together everything as I would perceive the message should be written. So being a believer in the

eclectic approach, I persevered and what follows is my rendition of the why and wherefores of effective communication for leaders in the field of librarianship. The paper is organized into four sections, the first of which is a historical overview, a reason for the present and future. Next is the focus on communication followed by an illustrative case and finally the challenge.

HERITAGE

I would suggest that language implies communication whether it be written, spoken, or symbolic and that librarians as collectors and disseminators of the language are directly involved in the two-way flow of communication. Furthermore, I would state that from the earliest days of recorded language, librarians have been the single most influential force in the history of communication. A laurel which we must, cannot and will not rest upon. Rather it is a torch which we will continue to carry. On what are these claims based? Consider language first.

Melvil Dewey contended that knowledge could be classified according to man's social evolution. It was apparent to him that as soon as man began to gather in groups, a form of communication became necessary. Hence we have language in the 400's immediately after man as a social being in the 300's of social sciences. Certainly we would

acknowledge that language is the basis of communication whether it be written, spoken, symbolic, electronic, or body.

Language is on-going, never static, diverse in form, and multi-philological. Furthermore, just as words of individual languages have evolved and been modified by hundreds of peoples and cultures, so has the method of storage and retrieval evolved from the early hieroglyphics, cuneiforms, through rolls, illuminations to acidic paper, acid free paper to microfiche/film, diskettes, C-D ROM disks, to electronically stored and transmitted messages.

Language is the foundation of our livelihood, for throughout the ages we have been the keepers, organizers, and disseminators of recorded language. And as conditions changed so has our language. Scrolls vs. books, print vs. non-print, chains vs. Tattle tapes, borrower/user vs. patron and client.

Second, ponder the names of library leaders from Aristotle to the Hugh Atkinsons' of our day. Actually, Aristotle is not the first name recorded to be a collector and organizer of books. Ashurbanipal (669-627) BCE is reported to have collected an archival collection of 25,000 tablets. While previous to Ashurbanipal a Babylonian town of Nipper boasted a room filled with clay tablets as early as the 3rd millennium BCE. What we do not have is the name of a

person who held the position of librarian until Aristotle. His collection is reputed to have been organized for the purpose of research and to have served as the model for the Alexandrian library. Classical world leaders responsible for planning, initiating or creating libraries include Attlus, Cicero, Lucullus, Tiberius, and Constantine the Great.[4 & 5]

The trend to tie library history to names of leaders, whether they be religious, civic, or political, continues through the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Crucial to the theme of this paper is the obvious value placed on possession and suppression of communication. Monastic libraries disappeared then were later sought out during Elizabeth's reign to be used purposefully for propaganda. Martin Luther fought to counter the destruction and is credited with a letter to all German towns in 1524. In the letter he declared "that neither pains nor money should be spared in setting up libraries, or book houses, particularly in the large towns."[6] Near the end of the Eighteenth Century other great leaders important to the library world emerge, for who can forget names such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, both committed to collecting and sharing the written word.

This brief survey has a message for the library community. In times of prosperity and adversity, enlightenment and darkness, peace and war, communication has

been both revered and feared, shared and suppressed by world leaders throughout the ages. (How often it was the state or world leader who is remembered in connection with the library rather than the librarian.) The importance placed on recorded communication by world leaders is evidenced by the fact that it became the prize booty of war. Many leaders acquired their libraries as the result of war. Plundered libraries may destroy the written word but the language will endure forever. "What a great language I have, it's a fine language we inherited from the fierce Conquistadors. . . . They carried everything off and left us everything. . . . They left us the words."[7]

Recent history begins to focus on the contribution of library leaders rather than leaders who contributed to library development. There isn't a librarian alive who can ignore the contributions of Melvil Dewey and a score of others. Askew, Carey and Flexner may not be household words but they embraced state of the art, preserved the past, and explored the future.

FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION

Focus now on the language currently before us. What are the buzz words coming from the literature of leadership and how do we respond? Motivate, set goals, communicate, assert, empower, develop staff, manage conflict, supervise, delegate, articulate, prepare, and inform, such are the words

floating about the literature of leadership. As premiere personalities in the information explosion, what keystones will we embrace? What is the challenge to librarians of the Twenty-first Century?

Kahil Gibran wrote in Sand and Foam," "We shall never understand one another until we reduce the language to seven words." I have been told that the current President of NEA listed seven characteristics of leadership. However, it is my contention that a single word of only seven letters is the key to survival and success for today's librarians/information scientists. (Even our name has changed to better reflect the profession in which we serve, proving that language is not static but alive and fluid.)

My seven letter word is network. Network, the very word implies communication. Networking empowers librarians/information scientists to heighten the language of successful leadership. We must engage in communication to move off our laurels.

Networking for success as discussed in this paper involves personal, organizational and electronic communication. How convenient it would be if we could examine each one individually then tie them neatly together in a summary. However, the three are so entwined a different approach is necessary. The discussion must flow from one to

another and back again. The full import of each will be the focus of the illustrative case.

The most pervasive of the three is electronic networking. Leaders in the profession are advocating, seeking and engaging in networking relationships. The world of cataloging has been revolutionized by networks such as OCLC, RLIN, and WLN. Information access has escalated to gigantic proportions through electronic networks such as BRS and DIALOG. Shrinking book budgets resulting from inflation and budget slashes have fostered, even demanded interlibrary cooperation in the form of borrowing. Daily advertisements flood the mail for conferences on computer technology. Vendors vie for our subscription dollars. Every journal and newsletter tout C-D ROM and online databases. It behooves library administrators to study these communiques carefully and engage in meaningful "two-way flow" to be sure the products will do what is required. Are they Marc records or Marc format? Will products really chain? What are the gateway possibilities? Will the stand alone systems, be they circulation, acquisition or online catalogs, really suffice? And if so, will the cost factor outweigh the benefits lost by ignoring cooperative systems such as LCS? Are dial-up ports an alternative to complete in house service? Another electronic capability that must be mentioned here is telefacsimile. Telefax machines not only expedite document

delivery but are vital in other cooperative ventures to be discussed shortly.

The term "networking" did not appear in Library Literature until 1967-69. A term which usually refers to electronic networking as just discussed. Then can it be said that this phenomenon just appeared with the advent of computers? Definitely not. Networking under the label of library cooperation has long been a practice of library leaders who perceive our role of disseminators as important as collectors and organizers. A new writing has defined cooperation as the broad term used to name a relationship between libraries which is usually loose, networking as a more formal and precise relationship usually with specific goals of interlibrary loan, resource sharing as an activity in which libraries have direct access sharing and the cooperative library system as a legally established entity.[9] To continue the spirit of this paper, all terms will be used under the umbrella of cooperation spelled, networking.

One common denominator of the twentieth century librarians mentioned earlier in the paper is their commitment to the cooperative process--networking. Sarah Askew "did not work alone but recognized the importance of professional organization and cooperation."[10] Miriam E. Carey is known for the Iowa plan which involved achieving her ideal of "books to all citizens."[11] Jennie M. Flexner always asked

"What next?" and "Can the library be helped by it?"[12] Mass communication may not have been a buzz word then but she embodied the concept. Central to the theme of resource sharing in Illinois is the name of the late Hugh Atkinson. Atkinson's belief in resource sharing is embodied in LCS, the system which he imported to Illinois. The following narrative serves as a testimony of the value of networking for resource sharing.

> Resource sharing is the key to the success enjoyed by IO, and the LCS component is at the heart of this success. As of March 31, 1988, the 29 libraries had initiated 1.9 million interlibrary circulation transactions in the nearly eight years that LCS has operated as a statewide network. . . .An analysis of interlibrary circulation activity shows some interesting patterns that run counter to the traditional idea of smaller libraries raiding the collections of larger research libraries. The largest library in the network was a net borrower during fiscal year 1987. In fact the four smallest libraries loaned more items to the four largest libraries

> (ranging from 665,000 to 3,100,000 titles) than the four largest provided to the four smallest. These data support the contention that all member libraries have something to offer to other members, and every institution realizes some tangible benefits from participation in IO.[13]

Consortia have long shared on a small scale basis via mail and phone. LIBRAS, a group of sixteen private, four-year liberal arts college libraries has celebrated over twenty years of sharing resources via direct borrowing and interlibrary loan. A union list of serials is still maintained and prior to OCLC, the consortium maintained a union catalog in microform. Recent ventures include group buying of C-D ROM products and telefacsimile service for document delivery. Now leaders are championing quick and easy access to materials via circulation systems such as LCS. With the advent of IO, ILLINET Online, subject access to over 800 Illinois libraries will be available by the end of 1988. This electronic wonder did not just happen. At the crux of any such conglomerate you will find leaders dedicated to endless hours of professional networking.

In a system as complex as LCS (Library Computer System) organizational structure is a must. A policy making body is

paramount. This group of administrators is enhanced by a larger group of middle managers and its concomitant committee structure which deals with training, prioritizing work requests, developing enhancements, sharing "how-we-did it's." Both of these groups of people must be willing, able to listen and to articulate. They must be skilled in the art of negotiating for the common good. Another dimension of LCS or any similar venture is the need to acquire outside funding which requires a need for persuasive writing.

However, leaders in our profession will seek and participate in networking in other arenas as well. School districts may centralize ordering and cataloging, city and academic libraries may enter into reciprocal borrowing agreements. Libraries with in a geographic system may engage in group purchasing or compile periodical union lists. The 1985 Directory of Library Networks and Cooperative Library Organizations includes 968 organizations.[14] For that matter what academic library can ignore campus LAN's systems? Directors and systems librarians must initiate two way communication to keep the library an intregal part of the campus network.

Thus far the emphasis has been on the organizational or corporate nature of networking and the approach rather general. What remains to be identified is how can these wonders be accomplished? What magic formula can librarians

as leaders embrace to become successful networkers? Successful cooperative ventures do not just happen. They must be created by leaders who are willing to work hard, to communicate, and employ techniques of personal networking. Clement Andrews' philosophy was, "If, with my background, I cannot persuade my colleagues of the advisability of a new step, then the step would be a mistake."[15]

Communication and leadership literature abound. Colleges and universities are initiating communication majors and minors at an astounding rate. Professional consultants offer workshops and institutes all over the country. Yet we librarians have not taken up the banner. There is a paucity of library literature and if you can believe our critics, our communication effort has been lacking.

Collins and Ward justified their Communication Games Workshop on "the small amount of time devoted to communication in training librarians and information workers nowadays and its complete absence in courses offered several years ago."[16] "The stereotypical librarian is inevitably a female, one whose sexuality has been completely sublimated to her desires that every hair in her bun be perfectly straight, . . .the stern expression on her face maintain a Rushmore hardness."[17] Body language? "Academic librarians are not

strong in the leadership qualities required of those who make crucial decisions."[16]

Management textbooks present management styles and discuss the merits or pitfalls of each. It is not my intent to rehash those discussions. However, there are basic guidelines which can prove helpful to all leaders regardless of their style. Listening skills, common courtesy, an awareness of others' problems, needs, and recognition of their successes go a long way in establishing rapport. Availability, accessibility, visibility, and involvement are current buzz words. ILA sponsored a whole track on personal networking and image building at the 1988 yearly conference.

Caution! these mandates are not just for administrators or supervisors. Networking involves a two-way flow of communication. Employees have an obligation to fellow employees and to their supervisors to exhibit leadership qualities if the organization is to be the best it can be. To paraphrase Vern Pings, a network requires individuals in each participating relationship to be responsible. A network is without corporeity if agreement is not reached among individuals.[17] There is an adage about the chain being as strong as the weakest link. Clockwatchers, backstabbers, and whiners only serve to foster our somewhat tarnished popular image.

We all operate in a local, an area/regional and a global/world environment or to use another buzz word arena. This is true for grassroot employees, supervisors and administrators. Survival in each depends upon the willingness to communicate effectively both up and down the ladder. Another reference to LIBRAS is appropriate here.

From birth through infancy, childhood, and adolescence, it was an organization which functioned well with a blend of grassroot members and library directors. As the twentieth anniversary rolled around, there was a danger of it becoming an organization of only directors. Esprit de corps was sadly lacking. Shortly after being elected to the position of Vice-President-President elect for the year 1987-88, the President resigned leaving me to serve in both capacities for several months. "Sharing resources--theirs, yours, ours" had been my platform. As V-P, it was my job to plan programs reflecting that theme and suddenly as President it was my joyful frustration to implement and administer the programs. Interest groups were revived. Creative scheduling of meeting times linked with provision for individual networking in a social setting reaped great rewards. Attendance and involvement of the membership at large is at an all time high.

ILLUSTRATIVE MODEL

To illustrate all that has been said, let me tell you a story--one that will sound as if it should begin, "Once upon a time. . . ." There was a small liberal arts college that had come through rough times. The library suffered as is always the case. Not only were funds at a minimum but the seminary library which had existed in a corporate relationship with the college library left to merge with another seminary. What remained was a decimated periodical collection, a director ready for retirement, hard feelings among the faculty over the raid on the collection.

Shortly before the director's retirement, another staff member was made acting director while Director #1 finished out his tenure as periodicals librarian. After a period of eighteen months, the acting director became director.

Director #2 took stock of the situation and set about bringing affairs to order. Credibility became the by word. Expenditures came in just under budget. The collection was carefully and religiously inventoried. Massive weeding projects were undertaken to remove duplicate copies and outdated textbook type holdings. Director #2 was definitely efficient, capable of and willing to handle most every situation that could arise, maintenance included. It was not the least bit unusual to see her with screwdriver in

hand. Yet for all these virtues, adequate communication via the network process was occurring in very limited amounts on the campus.

Little or no attempt was made to interact with faculty. The model for staff was stay in the library and do your job. Reports, memos, and formal requests were sent to the administration only as requested. Coffee klatching and shared lunches were not the pattern. Staff outreach was no warmer or more gregarious than the concrete block 1950's building.

However, on the bright side, Director #2 was visionary and did maintain contacts in CWSC (Consortium of West Suburban Colleges) and LIBRAS. It was through contacts in these groups that the interest in LCS was generated. Eventually, acceptance into LCS was obtained. Meanwhile the college president had been busy with a networking project which resulted in a donor who was willing to fund a major library renovation.

Getting ready for the coming up of LCS ran parallel with the renovation project. Because the time frames on both projects were somewhat delayed, the culmination date for both the advent of LCS and the renovation of the library coincided with the year Director #2 reached retirement.

Director #3 arrived amid the last of the painting and papering to find LCS terminals stacked in boxes, one OCLC

M300 in operation, a staff of five wondering just how the jobs would now be allocated, a faculty awaiting change, and an administration wanting action.

Within a week, the staff had been surveyed, reassured and placed on an organizational chart that provided autonomy for each one in some area yet carefully designed as not to create subordinate positions among the professionals.

Within a period of weeks, Director #3 met new faculty and staff all over the campus. Over forty responded to a "dust the plaster from the books" day. Library staff were encouraged to go the Cage for lunch and mingle with faculty.

LCS came up by the time students reached campus. Immediately, informational sessions were scheduled for classes and individuals. Publicity and how-to-sheets were cranked out for distribution. Students came in droves, awed by the transformation of the building. Study areas were filled and circulation increased. All these factors were recorded and presented in an unprecedented annual report.

Staff were encouraged to identify needs and suggest solutions to problems. All ideas were carefully weighed. Whether the final decision was reached corporately or by edict, it was presented with sensitivity to all concerned. Action requiring administration approval was carefully staged to elicit the desired response. Documentation and justification were always part of the strategy.

By the end of the year, all staff members had attended at least one and some several meetings off campus, including ALA, ILA, and ACRL conferences. Professional involvement has not waned in the years since. In the last three years, one librarian has presented a paper at a national conference. The Director and Deputy Librarian have held executive positions in LIBRAS and another member has been elected for next year. Prominence has also been achieved in the LCS arena. This past year the Director was President of ILCSO/Chair of the Policy Council which is the governing body for all of LCS/ILLINET Online. The Deputy Librarian chaired the Operations Committee of ILCSO which includes representatives from all 29 participating institutions and serves as the working body. As a concerned and involved library leader, Director #3 has attended both ILA and ALA legislative days.

Meanwhile, back at the library much meaningful communication was occurring. In 1986, the Director presented the administration with a twenty-four page document entitled "A Five Year Plan For Oesterle Library: A Planning Proposal."[20] Goals for a college library were defined. Specific goals for the local library were stated. Methods for measuring effectiveness were addressed. Response from the administration was most positive--to the extent that some of the material was included in the college five year plan

completed this year. And on it goes, one contact after another, one memo after another, one report after another.

Now, after three years the staff has grown to eight, a second M300 has been installed, three C-D ROM players are available, direct borrowing for public library patrons is available at a modest fee, a sound-around, large screen, projection system has been added, a computer lab is available to students and the public for word processing, PC's are on desks of five staff members, by July 1988 there will be an additional eight LCS/IO ports, bringing the total to sixteen, and by fall of 1988 there will be an additional public service area for reserve materials apart from the existing circulation area.

Derek Walcott wrote in "Codicil"[21] "To change your language you must change your life." Perhaps the reverse is true. Change your language and you will change your life. Director #3 changed the language at a small liberal arts college library, one that had been content and status quo. With that change of language, came a whole new life for the library both on and off campus.

CHALLENGE

Cooperation and sharing between the traditional and public service areas must occur. Outreach to campus or community organizations is a must. Gone are the days of retreating to cloisters or cataloging corners. A wide world

of professional organizations on area, state, and national levels await the astute library professional. "No man is an island" has ever been more appropriate to our profession. Sharing stories, ideas, content, materials and support are the rewards and necessities for today's librarian. Report and celebrate success, identify problems, propose solutions, persevere, keep an awareness profile in local, area/regional and global arenas and you will speak the language of leadership.

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